(b) whether there was any order or rule making it mandatory for Government officers to resign or retire before they could be appointed to top posts in PSOs;

(c) whether deviations have been made from the above practice in recent years; and

(d) if so, the number of cases where Government officers have been allowed to take up such assignments on deputation or lien basis?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) According to rules and regulations, selection of Chief Executives and Functional Directors in Public enterprises is made by the Public Enterprises Selection Board operating under the Deptt. Personnel and Training and the appointment is made by the concerned administrative Ministry/Department after completing various formalities. The policy of the Government is to appoint, through a fair and objective selection procedure, outstainding professional managers to top level posts in PSOs. Government has also recognised the need to develop a cadre of professional managers within the public sector. Hence, unless markedly better candidates are available from outside, internal candidates are preferred for Board level appointments. In special cases, recruitments are made from the organised services under the Central Government.

(b) to (d). Deputation of Government officers to posts in Central public enterprises is not permitted except in the case of Chief Executives and regional/zonal chiefs who require continuous liaison and coordination with State Governments and where expertise acquired in the State Government is needed for organisational efficiency. As per available information, eight Government officers have been allowed to take up board level assignments in public enterprises on deputation basis in relaxation of the general rules/ guidelines, during 1995 and 1996.

[Translation]

Investment by Australian

2188. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Australia has offered to make investment in various fields in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c). During the period from 1.8.91 to 31.8.96, the Government of India has approved an Investment of Rs. 20871.6 million from Australian firms in different sectors. The top 5 sectors of Australian investment during the above period are :

	Sector	Amount (Rs. in million)	% of total amount approved for Australia
1.	Mettalurgical Industries	10539.72	49.70%
2.	Telecommunication	8005.55	37.75%
3.	Electrical Equipment	914.62	4.31%
4.	Chemical	643.49	3.03%
5.	Miscellaneous	521.05	2.46%

[English]

Health Insurance

2189. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce some health insurance and housing security scheme for the senior citizens of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the suggetions received by the Government from various sectors in that regards; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). It has been reported by the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) that the General Insurance Industry already provides 3 major medical insurance policies viz. Mediclaim; Bhavishya Arogya and Jan Arogya, which even a senior citizen can purchase on payment of prescribed premium. The General Insurance Industry also provides Hut Insurance cover to families in rural areas whose income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 4800/- per annum. Under this scheme, a compensation of Rs. 1,000/- is payable if the hut gets destroyed by fire and Rs. 500/- if the belongings in the hut are destroyed. No premium is payable by the beneficiary. In addition, the General Insurance Industry also provides insurance cover against theft and burglary; loss or damage to buildings and contents by fire, lightning, explosion of gas in domestic appliances and other extraneous perils etc. under the 'Comprehensive house holders' insurance policy. Any citizen of the country; including a senior citizen can purchase these policycovers on payment of prescribed premium. The insurance companies constantly review the need for changes in the policies based on the experience gained by them and on receipt of suggestions from various quarters from time to time.